



4-H PROGRAMS OF DISTINCTION SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

This document provides an overview of the Programs of Distinction review and submission process. It also provides specific guidelines for completing the Programs of Distinction submission form. Please return your completed application to POD@csrees.usda.gov as an e-mail attachment with "POD Submission" in the subject line.

OVERVIEW

What is 4-H Programs of Distinction?

4-H Programs of Distinction is a collection of program descriptions that reflect the high quality of 4-H youth development programs occurring in communities across the United States. The collection is housed in a searchable web-based database. These programs:

- Exhibit strong program development characteristics and contribute to the youth development body of knowledge
- Convey new ideas, materials, or innovative methods related to positive youth development
- Demonstrate evidence of effectiveness, such as demonstrated changes in knowledge, behaviors, attitudes or aspirations of 4-H youth and adults

Why 4-H Programs of Distinction?

The 4-H Programs of Distinction are designed to help 4-H professionals to:

- Communicate the high quality of 4-H youth development programs that are occurring in communities across the United States
- Assist others in improving their practices in positive youth development
- Better understand and promote the nature of scholarship in their work
- Submit program outcomes through a peer-evaluated format

How are 4-H Programs of Distinction accessible?

4-H Programs of Distinction are available on the National 4-H Headquarters website through the CYFERnet searchable database. The on-going submission process will allow for continuously new content. Top "Program of Distinction" entries will be selected for invited presentations and/or poster sessions at the annual NAE4-HA conference.

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION

In order to be considered for inclusion in the Programs of Distinction database, a youth development program must meet the following definition: "An organized, purposeful set of activities designed to achieve positive youth development outcomes."

Programs of Distinction submissions are reviewed independently by three peer reviewers for program content and readability. A total of 100 points are possible. The Program Content section may account for up to a total of 75 points. Comments will be provided by reviewers as appropriate.

The following “readability” factors may account for up to a total of 25 points:

- Interest—how strongly the submission captures and holds a reader’s attention.
- Comprehension-The submission uses easy-to-understand language and flows well.
- Development-Paragraphs and sentences are appropriately sequenced and constructed to support the central idea and conclusions.
- Mechanics-The submission uses acceptable standards of spelling and grammar.
- Use of graphics and tables-Tables, graphs, or photographs are accurate and used appropriately. (Please note—you do not need to include these unless they are warranted).

FORMATTING AND LENGTH

The maximum length for the Program Content section (Questions 6-14) is six pages, not including tables or graphics. Text should use 11- or 12-point font, and have one-inch margins on all sides. Please include the program title as a header on each page.

QUESTION-BY-QUESTION GUIDELINES

Specific instructions for completing the Programs of Distinction Submission form questions are provided below in blue italic text.

1. Title of the Program

Please provide the name of the program that you would like to be considered for “Programs of Distinction” recognition.

2. Submitter’s Contact Information

3. Contact Information for Others Who Should Receive Copies of Correspondence about the Status of this Submission

Please include the names of others such as your state’s program leader, colleagues, funders, etc. who should be notified about the status of this submission.

4. Program of Distinction Category

The categories listed below are used to organize the Programs of Distinction database. Please select up to six categories that best reflect your program.

Leadership, Citizenship and Life Skills Categories

- ☐ Leadership Development
- ☐ Caring Relationships, Community Spirit
- ☐ Diversity & Inclusive Environments
- ☐ Workforce Preparation
- ☐ Financial Education

Science, Engineering and Technology Literacy Categories

- ☐ Natural Resources Education
- ☐ Animal Science & Food and Fiber Systems
- ☐ Foods & Nutrition
- ☐ Agriculture & Environmental Biotechnology
- ☐ Horticulture & Plant Sciences
- ☐ Science Engineering & Technology

Healthy Lifestyles Categories

- ☐ Youth Obesity
- ☐ Nutrition Education
- ☐ Health & Fitness
- ☐ Safety
- ☐ Healthy Relationships, Good Decisions

Youth in Governance Categories

- ☐ Youth & Adult Partnerships
- ☐ Youth Decision-Making
- ☐ Youth Action
- ☐ Youth in Organizational Governance
- ☐ Community Engagement

Organizational Strategies Categories

- ☐ Strategic Communication & Marketing
- ☐ Partnership & Grants
- ☐ Risk Management Strategies
- ☐ Volunteer Development
- ☐ Developing & Retaining 4-H Professionals
- ☐ Leadership & Governance of Boards

5. Sources of funding that support this program

Please include any sources of funding, both public and private, that support this program. Please include any funding that you receive from the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service (CSREES), such as CYFAR, EFNEP, FSNEP, etc.

6. Knowledge and Research Base

Describe the knowledge and research base that was used to inform and develop the program's design and content. Include any relevant citations using American Psychological Association (APA) style guidelines. This should be a summary or overview of the research base, such as methodology and theories used, not simply

a reference list. In addition, the description of the program's design and content should reflect this knowledge and research base.

7. Needs Assessment

Please describe any needs assessment that was conducted in order to develop and/or plan the program. Specifically, what relevant data were collected and/or used as part of this needs assessment? From whom were the data collected? What did these data reveal about the needs in your community or among your target audience(s)? Please describe how the planned educational efforts in your program were based on this needs assessment.

8. Goals and Objectives

Please describe the goal(s) for your program. These can be defined as "Statements of purpose that generally take one to five years to complete and explicitly spell out who will do what for what purpose."¹ Goals are typically broader than objectives.

Please describe your program's objectives. Objectives are often described using the acronym "SMART"—Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time limited.

The program goals and objectives should be clearly stated and relevant to your program and/or the needs assessment described in question 7.

9. Target Audience

Please describe the specific target audience for your program. In your description, please include the geographical setting in which the program takes place:

- *Rural—Towns under 10,000 people*
- *Small town with population between 10,000 and up to 50,000*
- *Suburb of a city over 50,000*
- *Central city over 50,000*

It is also possible to have more than one target audience, such as youth participating in a 4-H Club and community members who are involved in a youth-led community service project. Please indicate all relevant target audiences for the program in your description.

10. Program Design and Content

a. Type of program

Please indicate, from the list below, which category best describes your program:

- *Organized 4-H Club—led by an adult with a planned program that is carried out throughout all or most of the year.*

¹ DeBord, K. et al. (n.d.) *Parenting evaluation decision framework: Writing goals*. Raleigh, NC: North Carolina Cooperative Extension.

- *Special interest/Short-term program/Day Camp—Groups of youth meeting for a specific learning experience*
- *4-H Overnight Camping Program—An Extension planned educational experience of group living in the out-of-doors that includes being away from home at least one night.*
- *4-H School Enrichment Program—Groups of youth receiving a sequence of learning experiences in cooperation with school officials during school hours*
- *School-Aged Child Care Education Program—Educational program offered to youth outside of school hours, incorporating 4-H curricula.*
- *Other: _____ (Please Describe)*

b. Methods used to deliver the program

Please describe the methods used to deliver the program. In your response, please address how these methods are appropriate for the target audience and context in which the program operates, and how the delivery methods help the program achieve its goal(s).

c. Curricula and/or educational materials

Please describe any curricula and/or educational materials that have been developed specifically for this program, or any curricula and/or educational materials that are being used in this program. How are these curricula and/or educational materials being used in the program?

d. Partnerships or collaborations

Please describe any partnerships or collaborations that have been formed to support this program, especially any cross-disciplinary collaboration. How do these teams or partnerships support the program?

11. Program Evaluation

For this section, please include an overall description of how the evaluation was conducted (e.g., what was the evaluation's design, what kinds of data were collected, from whom, by what methods, etc.). It is also helpful for this section to indicate the extent to which your program's goals and objectives (described in Question 8) were met. Considering including tables and/or graphics when appropriate.

a. Process

Please describe any process evaluation of the program that has been conducted and results from this evaluation that support that program activities were conducted as planned. This would include any available participation data (number of participants, intensity of participation, duration of participation, etc.)

b. Outcomes and Impacts

Please describe any outcome evaluation of the program that has been conducted, and results from this evaluation that indicate there were real, measurable short-term, mid-term, and/or long-term changes in knowledge, attitudes, skills, practices, or conditions.

c. Communication to stakeholders

How has evidence of the effectiveness and/or impact of this program been communicated to key stakeholders, such as program participants, staff, family members, community members, funders, etc.?

12. Program Sustainability

Please describe how this program is being sustained over time, or plans that have been developed to sustain this program over time.

13. Replication

How has this program been replicated in other settings? If it has not been replicated, please describe possibilities for replication in other settings. Include any components that are needed for successful replication, regardless of whether the program has actually been replicated.

14. Rationale and Importance of Program

Please describe how this program represents something that 4-H educators, colleagues and stakeholders should know about.